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Negotiating critical, postcritical literacy: The problematic of text analysis

Radha Iyer

Abstract

Critical literacy has been a particular focus in literacy education in the past two decades. Literacy models such as the 'four resources' model provide a significant framework for a critical understanding of text and the social and cultural practices that inform them. In this paper, I draw on the 'four resources' model to argue that the success of the template in developing critical literacy depends upon focusing adequate analytic attention on those subjectivities employed in such practices. The intersubjective classroom dynamics and the subjective engagement of literacy practitioners are of equal importance in determining the meanings co-constructed among subjects. I argue that beyond being text analysts, reflective practitioners consisting of the teacher, and students as a group, can engage in postcritical negotiations of the text, contribute to new meaning possibilities, and adopt an on-going critical stance. Applying this literacy model successfully requires acceptance of a multiplicity of interpretations, collaborative practice between teachers and students, and fluid subject positions. The paper concludes by considering the problematic of the classroom as a dynamic site for textual and cultural contestation of multiple perspectives.

Keywords: 'four resources' model, text analysis, critical theory, critical literacy subjectivity.

Introduction

Critical analysis is as an integral aspect of literacy which, from print to multimodal, multiliteracies, is perceived as a complex social and cultural practice (cf Luke and Freebody, 1997). The importance of critical reading is underpinned in models of literacy such as 'four resources' model (Freebody and Luke, 1990, 2003), 'three dimension (3D) model' (Durrant and Green, 2000) and 'multiliteracies' model (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000).

While all three models adopt a critical/cultural view of literacy, this paper draws upon the 'four resources' model of literacy (Freebody and Luke, 1990, 2003; see also Luke and Freebody, 1997, 1999), to argue that the effectiveness of literacy as social and cultural practice lies in the reflective involvement of its stakeholders: the students and instructors. Literacy practices may be enmeshed in societal power and, thereby, subject to exclusions and inclusions. A significant contention is that meaning making and text analysis — being socially situated — are also sites of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980) and, therefore, differential meaning making often may not occur without major contestations between individual knowledges and institutional ideologies. Discourses as sites for the dispersion of power create 'suitable' knowledges (Foucault, 1980), and hegemonic institutional ideologies may isolate certain groups of individuals. In developing my argument, I adopt the perspectives of Ellsworth (1989), Hagood (2002), and Janks (2001a), to propose that critical literacy is problematic and requires, "pedagogy of inclusion" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 100) allowing the ongoing repositioning of subject positions of its stakeholders so that the voices of students as well as teachers are heard.

I begin the paper by briefly discussing the 'four resources' model to illustrate the significance of reading as a social and cultural practice, and discuss critical literacy as underpinned in the model. I then examine data from a tertiary level classroom to illustrate students' engagement with the concepts of text analysis and critical literacy. I argue that in order to achieve significant understandings of the diverse perspectives on critical literacy, the dialogic and heteroglossic nature (cf. Bakhtin, 1994) of discourses must be taken into account. The paper, further, takes on the poststructuralist stance to argue that a contextual ongoing inquiry into various perspectives is significant for insightful text analysis and critical literacy. Thus, those who are engaged in text analysis and critical literacy are reflective participants, both

shaping and being shaped by discourses. The subjectivities of participants in an interactive group environment are of equal importance in considering the effectiveness of critical literacy. The paper concludes by recommending that while being text analysts is illustrative in raising key questions about critical reading, it cannot be uncritically assumed that it will ensure the goals of critical literacy.

Models of literacy and critical literacy

The 'four resources' model was developed in Australia in the 1990s, by Freebody and Luke (1990, 2003), Luke and Freebody (1997, 1999), to provide a framework for teaching literacy and to set appropriate course content for assessment which could demonstrate the complexities of literacy demands of present times. Thus, the literacy model was developed with the aim to "focus directly on the flexibility and responsiveness of pedagogy" (Freebody and Luke, 2003, p. 58), it is, as Freebody and Luke (2003, p. 56) argue, 'a map' of the processes involved in literacy: of code breaking, text participant, meaning making and text analysis, in which teachers can "analyse, weigh and balance students' diverse practices and capacities, a range of curriculum and pedagogic possibilities" (Freebody and Luke, 2003, p. 56).

The four resources were initially mapped out as significant aspects of literacy sessions (see Freebody, Ludwig and Gunn, 1995) because, as Freebody and Luke (2003) illustrate, literate practices till quite recently were a narrow set of in-text foci with the central aspect being students as text participants. In brief, while there was a significant focus upon code breaking there was an absence of, or a negligible focus on, meaning making and text analysis. Primarily, Freebody, Ludwig and Gunn's (1995) study found literacy sessions to be haphazard, with sudden shifts in focus and little or no provision for in-depth and critical engagement with texts. Thus, the study on literacy practices by Freebody and Luke (1990, 2003), Luke and Freebody (1997, 1999), dismissed any one "best practice" of literacy, and attempted to relate theories of literacy to the "needs of the students, their linguistic and cultural resources and their future pathways" (p. 58).

The applicability of the model as a teaching tool for literacy practices is demonstrated in a number of teaching contexts in Australia from mainstream classes to second language learners in both the secondary and the primary classroom. More recently, in the United States it has been used to study the improvement of reading comprehension and critical literacy (Rush, 2004).

The basic premise of the 'four resources' model is that the complex demands of present day print and multimodal literacy require a "broad and flexible repertoire of practices" (Freebody and Luke, 2003, p. 56). The authors argue that the model is based on social and cultural practices that are present and are reiterated in institutions. Thus, schools and tertiary organizations are perceived as places that engender and foster textual practices. Schools then become active sites; they "enabl[e] institutional space" (ibid, p. 57) for developing a knowledge base for insightful text construction or, as the authors note, "interacting, working with, talking about and 'discoursing on', thinking and strategizing through, managing and manipulating texts, their designs, discourses, and languages" (ibid, p. 57). The model rests on the recognition that texts occupy a central position in the knowledge-based economy of 'New Times', and literacy practices are perceived as engaging with work and identity.

Briefly, each part of the model is invested with a set of textual practices. Code breaking emphasises understanding conventions of sounds, symbols, parts of speech, paralanguage cues, spellings, sentence structures, as well as text layout and font. Understanding the code enables readers to develop effective strategies for text comprehension. In effective text participation, readers draw upon their background knowledge in order to understand the complex meaning of texts. As text users, readers display knowledge of the purposes for which texts are used, are capable of understanding the cultural and social purposes underpinning texts, and can use a range of texts for an assortment of purposes. As capable text analysts, readers are able to critique authorial intent and the ideologies invested in texts, and perceive how "texts…use various socio-cultural categories to constrain interpretation" (Freebody, 2004, p. 7).

Importantly, the four resources are perceived as together constituting a method of "interrogating practice" (Freebody and Luke, 2003, p. 57). The Socratic mode implied in the model calls into question established classroom and whole school literacy practices. The model thus aims at systematically "unpacking" (Freebody and Luke 2003, p. 58) and segmenting literacy practices. In this process, the 'four resources' model attempts to draw upon flexible, interactive and socially inclusive pedagogy. The model aims to move beyond a linear teacher directed focus on literacy towards an interactive, inclusive philosophy of teaching aimed at deconstructing and discarding

any “best practices” for achieving literacy that may be available over the counter. Moreover, the model aims to shift the ‘best practices’ from the suites of curriculum planning 'back into the classroom’. Teacher and students are perceived as the reflective co-constructors of the best literacy practices.

While each part of the model is equally important and, as the authors insist, there is no hierarchical structure, the meaning making and the text analysis component are of particular interest to this paper. This focus is adopted as the model aims to acknowledge difference and strive for inclusion, an intent which contrasts with psychological theories that assume a linear, singular and standardized approach to education. In being more inclusive, the model aims to attend to all aspects of diversity in society that impact upon literacy practices, taking into account the historical, cultural and social construction of values, particularly as societies have become increasingly diverse (see Freebody and Luke, 2003, p. 62).

The firm embedding of literacy practices in social and cultural context raises significant issues for practitioners. Meaning making in general and text analysis, in particular, depend heavily upon the responses of the reader. As noted earlier, text analysis not un-problematic and is heavily dependent upon the power/knowledge constructions (Foucault, 1980) present in the class. It draws upon socio-critical theory to produce dynamic questioning of social, cultural norms and thereby exposes “relations of domination and exploitation” (Best and Kellner, 1991, p. 264). Critical literacy draws on critical theory to enable readers to “detect and handle the inherently ideological dimension of literacy” (Lankshear 1994, p.11). Despite this, using text analysis does not necessarily ensure the elimination or neutralisation of exclusionary processes that validate hegemonic and dominant perspectives. Further, engaging with critical thinking need not promote the kinds of literacies that pedagogues might wish to engender in their students. In fleshing out this argument, in the next section I discuss critical literacy and then present some classroom data portraying student discussion of critical literacy and text analysis.

Critical Literacy: a critique

Although a comprehensive review of the term ‘critical literacy’ is beyond the scope of this paper, I briefly discuss the key implications of this term as it is relevant to text analysis and critique.

Critical literacy is employed for the study of texts, particularly in analysing media texts (Iyer, 2004; C. Luke, 1999), popular culture (Finders, 2000; Kellner, 1995), multiliteracies (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000), and digital texts (Lankshear et al., 2000). It has been extensively theorised and debated in a range of contexts, such as in early years and critical literacy (Comber, 1993, 2001), in studies on identity (Hagood, 2002, Janks, 2001b) and more recently in the context of the teaching of English (Johnson, 2002). The scope of critical literacy is broad ranging — from a critical examination of texts and the positioning of readers (Freebody and Luke, 1990, 2003; Luke and Freebody, 1997, 1999) to Gee's (2001) "socially perceptive literacy" which is a "species of 'applied linguistics', of 'discourse analysis', really of 'Discourse analysis'" (p. 37).

Critical literacy, as Lankshear (1994), Luke and Walton (1994) observe, might take numerous forms. According to Lankshear (1994, p. 10) it could take any of the following three:

- possessing a "critical perspective on *literacy/literacies*";
- having a "critical/evaluative perspective on particular texts"
- "critical readings' of wider *social practices, arrangements, relations, allocations, procedures,* etc.," (emphasis in the original).

So the term critical literacy is fluid in meaning. But, for the purposes of this paper, it may be understood as critical perspectives on texts and social practices (see Leland and Harste, 2000).

In particular, critical literacy is embedded within social critical theory and takes into account the centrality of power/knowledge (Luke and Freebody, 1997). That is, in dealing with the social and cultural orientations of language, and through this with the political nature of language, critical literacy moves beyond the textual to questions of ideology. In Luke's (2000, p. 453) view, the aim of critical literacy in a classroom is to help students and teachers perceive "how texts work to construct their worlds" and use texts as "social tools" in reconstructing the world. In a broader context, critical literacy aims to unearth issues of social justice, and work towards a transformative politics, one that addresses how the systems and nature of representations could be altered (McLaren and Lankshear, 1993; see also Shor, 1992).

All these conceptualizations of critical literacy are lived out in classroom practices. In grappling with texts and issues of social and cultural practice, questions of the reiteration of individual identities and the ongoing formation of the subjectivities of participants cannot be ignored. Indeed, dealing with issues of identity and subjectivities of the participants is an important part of ensuring the successful application of critical literacy. The desire to engage with critical questioning derives from the broader goals of raising readers' awareness and effecting a change to their reader positions.

Within the given classroom dynamic, the text analyst position advocates a critical literacy focusing on the identities and subjectivities of the participants as much as on the normative ideologies of texts. A significant question arises: as subjects, constructing and being constructed by discourse (Foucault, 1980, 1983), what rights and responsibilities do participants have in the co-construction of meaning making and text participation? I argue that the success of the template depends heavily upon the ongoing constructions of the self of those engaged in textual deconstruction. Thus, teachers have to realise that critical literacy is not an unproblematic tool to be applied unquestioningly without affecting the identities and subjectivities of those engaged in its practice.

As text participants, the instructor and students are engaged in meaning making of the text and, thereby, enter into an interactive, dialogic (Bakhtin, 1994) participation. It might be right to assume that participants use the materiality of the texts to construct themselves as fluid, mobile and ever evolving selves (see Hagood, 2002). As a poststructural approach, this, then, demands the examination of texts as capable of producing multiple interpretations- meaning as the result of text construction by participants. Within this perspective, readers are perceived as having the power and agency to propose multiple knowledges that can challenge thinking and force the reformulation of their viewpoints.

Text analysis draws on critical framing by interactants through discussion that attends to, and is inclusive of, diversity and difference of discourse. Significantly, text analysis is dependant on intertextuality, heteroglossia and dialogism (see Bakhtin, 1994), a set of complex processes that highlight the intrinsic interrelatedness and diversity of texts. According to Bakhtin (1994, p. 86), dialogism illustrates the

interrelatedness and complexity of utterances as these have “many half-concealed or completely concealed words of others with varying degree of foreignness” which, in turn, create counter-utterances. Drawing on Bakhtin (1994), the complex sets of voices that filter through in classrooms encompass multi-vocality and heteroglossia, as multiple voices, and multiple discourses interweave as complex networked processes. Therefore, as Hicks (1996, p. 107) observes, being dialogic implies, ‘a creative dynamic’, as students co-create new responses through discourses that surround them.

In proposing an integrative engagement with literacy, text analysis and critical literacy in proposing an integrative engagement with literacy underpin the significance of language’s multi-vocality and multiplicity invested in language and the importance of working and re-working discourses through contextual practice. In order to explain the significance of dialogic interaction and heteroglossia, and to exemplify this as a central concept of critical literacy, I proceed to examine data from tertiary education classes.

Examining classroom practices

As an educator taking numerous tertiary level classes that explored critical literacy and text analysis, I engaged in this study to better understand the struggles students encountered with such complex concepts. I draw upon communicative exchanges across two subjects offered for an undergraduate degree. While the greater part of the discussion is based upon web communication within one of the courses offered, I will also draw on students’ written responses to text analysis and the literacy model.

My data consists of 130 hours of classroom interaction with over 100 students, informal individual consultations and discussions with students over their assignment on text analysis, bulletin board discussions on critical literacy, and written work samples on text analysis. As participants in texts, we analysed sample texts and discussed the relevance of text analysis and critical literacy in class, through web discussion forums and in written work. However, I acknowledge that as diverse sources of data these are at once disjointed and interconnected.

I draw some themes relevant for critical literacy from the written work samples and bulletin board discussions for closer examination and admit that the selective process of preferring some themes over others might make the study seem slightly out of

context. Because this paper identifies the text analyst position for closer examination, I draw from my samples, specific examples that refer to engagement with critical literacy. I also acknowledge the selectiveness of the data in terms of eliminating comments which did not raise a critical edge to discussions. In this sense, the study presented here is a 'micro- study' of the entire effort of engaging with text analysis and critical literacy through a semester.

Critical theory and critical literacy strategies were applied to a range of texts — from curriculum areas to media texts — as a means of examining author perspective and ideologies. The comments of students were welcomed during each session and students were invited to critique text analysis and critical literacy.

Throughout the whole exercise, I was conscious of my position as an instructor, of representing the institution, and of my difference as an ethnic, female, university tutor with an entirely different set of social and cultural norms from the vast majority of the participating students. My own difference influenced my perspective on critical literacy and critical pedagogy. My difference meant that I had to consciously adopt alternative discourses being positioned as 'other' within a mainstream 'western' class. However, my positioning as a representative of the institution meant that I had to adopt the institutional discourses, thereby adopting discourses of privilege, positioning the students as 'other'.

The exercise in critical literacy therefore, was perceived as both necessary, insightful, and problematic. While the students acknowledged the need for text analysis, they were deeply conscious of the need for teachers to be aware of issues such as hidden curriculum and the democratic purposes of knowledge students bring with them. As one student noted:

> Teachers need to be considerate of the content they present within their classrooms so as not to offend students. Teachers should engage with the different forms of social, cultural and political capital that students hold, so that the articulation of different forms of literacy is possible. The success of the model is in being integrated with other teaching framework to produce well balanced multiliterate students for today's changing world.

What is notable in this comment is that for this student, the significance of the model to present day literacy practices lies in its awareness of the diversity of students and their social, cultural practices. This is supported by Shapiro's (1994 cited in Kanpol, 1994, pp. 167-168) comment that beyond the strictly intellectual task of problem

solving and analysing texts, critical literacy also undertakes to develop a moral vision, questioning whether people are treated with dignity and respect.

An even more powerful comment was from a student who stated that the text analyst position may not necessarily help students critically assess why teachers choose to examine certain texts and not others. The student stated:

> The model does not allow the student to examine if there is a 'hidden curricula' at work within their subject areas. Perhaps, the critical analysis of texts should examine author, student and teachers as subjects of scrutiny.

Here, the comment underlines the subtle institutional intent that might be at work, thus giving weight to Ellsworth's (1989, p. 312) comment that "a relation between teacher/student becomes voyeuristic when the voice of the pedagogue himself goes unexamined".

Another student was of the opinion that the idea of discovering authorial intent and biases may be more autobiographical than seems obvious:

> Critical literacy may tell the listener more about YOUR biases than those that are hidden within the text being analysed. The idea of critical text analysis is problematic because texts and the people who wrote them are complex entities, not necessarily subjecting themselves to the roles of analysis being imposed upon them.

While for some students critical literacy was an enlightening means of developing a critical mind, some found it quite "annoying that they were looking for a hidden agenda". This perspective was taken further by another student who approached critical literacy cautiously: "It can be argued that all texts are persuasive and we need not only teach students to look beyond the text, but to consider why we have chosen the particular text over others. Our choices reveal our personal beliefs and biases".

Some students from culturally different backgrounds found critical literacy a new experience, helping them, towards understanding the deep intent of texts and commented on how the exercise made them neutral and objective for the first time. Clearly, these students had experienced institutional authority over content and meaning:

> Critical literacy helps language learners to step outside of ideologies and others' viewpoints. I didn't come across such analysis in my home country, so it was fresh for me and as a second language learner I liked to think independently and not be positioned by other people's opinions. Language learners absorb whatever there is in the non-native society and culture at face

> value. What they need to know is that there are intentions and perspective behind the scene.

Another student from an eastern country took text analysis as a means by which to learn how to eliminate certain texts that were not culturally and socially suitable. As the student commented:

> Critical literacy has opened my eyes to something new and something important. For instance, it has made me realise one must know what to consider as being credible and what to reject. For instance, certain programs, certain texts may be acceptable in certain cultures, such as 'Big Brother' but not for all especially in eastern cultures such as mine.

The problematic for this student therefore would be to construct an analysis that could fit in with the institutional discourses, and to choose from the available identities one that fits her. Another student, whose background had not prepared her to deal with the idea of critique, stated that she '*did not like critical literacy and analysing texts*', especially if it meant taking a stance, because her education had prepared her for describing and exposition rather than argument and personal subject constructions. For some international students, critical literacy was "beneficial and meaningful because it really improved my ability of viewing things around me in a more neutral way". Clearly, for this student, critical literacy was a means to acquire the institutionally validated discourse.

For yet another student, critical literacy was a means to distinguish differences in educational focus:

> I think it is extremely important that students learn to become critical readers in life, because without this ability we won't be able to construct our own values and perspectives as an independent individual. Students in my home country have never been taught about critical literacy and I was taught about critical literacy in Australia in Grade 11. It was the first time I was taught about viewing things from an objective angle and not to be positioned to see what we are intended.

For another student 'critical literacy teaches students not to take things for granted and to question the reality of the text', while yet another student commented that critical literacy and text analysis helps language learners to step outside ideologies and others' objective viewpoints so they "won't be victims of media". Clearly, for these students, while the critical focus allowed some distancing from the institutional norms, it was also a means to distance themselves from subjective perspectives. The study showed that while for some students, text analysis was a means to achieve 'objective', 'neutral' stance, for others critical literacy was a means to justify dominant ideologies.

Engaging with text analysis and critical literacy raised important issues for the class. Whatever their backgrounds, the diversity of the classroom provides surprises for teacher and students, in the variety of critique that emerges.
Engaging with text analysis and critical literacy moved these readers beyond the pedagogue's rationalistic, objective standpoint of representing the institution, or the 'other' representing alternative discourse. Indeed the concern was to establish the stated purpose of the model: that comprehending "cultural and ideological perspectives is an equally crucial part of a professional response to a complex and contested environment that is both informed and regulated by texts" (Freebody and Luke, 2003, p 63).

So the exercise required moving beyond the institutional, authoritative binaries of power/powerless, self/other, mainstream/marginalised. The task highlighted the inadequacy of engaging in exercises of exposing authorial intent and standpoint, and underpinned the significance of moving towards the co-construction of the text participants as reflective practitioners. Merely exposing the hegemonic ideals and what this might imply to the reader, or accepting and exposing the 'hidden curricula' were shown to be insufficient. An urgent need was demonstrated for all involved to move beyond, to "explore multiple avenues" for "creating [critical] space" (Kanpol, 1994, p. 51).

Positioning the reader: critically

To move beyond the limited scope provided by contextual meanings, it is necessary to take into account text analysts and how they are positioned within institutional contexts. It cannot be assumed that responses may not be resisted, or that exclusionary processes will not work to validate dominant perspectives. Moreover, the position of the text analyst may not be highly favoured where institutional agendas do not recognize cultural differences. Discourses set up as alternatives to dominant discourses may not be easily accepted or may be ignored. Under such circumstances, as Ellsworth (1989) notes, unless it is supported by programs that address institutional power and agency critical pedagogy may offer only abstractions.

This stance would indeed be validated if critical literacy only examined the text only, without taking reflective practice into account. In engaging with the text analyst

aspect, caution is to be exercised as the analysts' role may be surrounded by the complexity of "silenc[ing] [diversity] in the name of liberatory pedagogy" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 299). Ellsworth's notion of critical pedagogy and critical reflection as instituting the voices of the students and speaking to the system signifies the importance of moving away from determinist discourses to enable differences to be heard.

Teachers engaging with text analysis and critical literacy are aware of the non-neutrality of the task, while nevertheless hoping to enable readers to perceive ideologies in texts and "to use them in different social fields" (Luke2000, p. 453). One central notion in this paper is that reflective practice does not necessarily occur through text participation, meaning making or text analysis, and requires on-going application of critique to texts and participant perspectives. Thus, to counter the limited focus on contextual meanings produced through text analysis, and to move beyond the power/knowledge nexus, it is necessary to perceive participants as fluid, multiple selves involved in a critique and post critical negotiation of meanings of texts. This, then, implies a constant move to be interactive and 'dialogic' (Bakhtin, 1994). This perspective contends that instead of choosing the most suitable reader-friendly discourse, interactants should participate actively in meaning making where, as Hagood (2002, p. 255) notes, they "speak themselves into existence… and are produced by texts".

To counter the rationalist, ideological impositions that could occur from teachers adopting the institutional objective stance of the pedagogue, a poststructuralist stance is necessary. Adopting a poststructural perspective of the multiplicity of the self enables one to shift subject positions in meaning making, thereby moving towards an inclusive perspective. The poststructural notion of the multiple, fluid self has been well argued by critics such as Weedon (1997) and Guattari (1995). Guattari (1995, p. 9), theorises subjectivity as "an ensemble of conditions which render possible the emergence of individual and or collective instances". According to these critics, subjectivity is always in the process of shifting and is a staggered effect of multiple discursive themes. This perspective enables a shift from perceiving texts as comprised of certain set identities and discourses, to participants engaging in actively shaping and being shaped by discourses. Further, the perspective acknowledges that multiple interpretations of texts are possible. This, in turn, enables a move to be inclusive of a

diverse range of perspectives, from institutionally sanctioned viewpoints to alternative discourses.

The poststructural imperative to perceive texts as invested with reader perspectives and contextual manifold meanings, however, comes at a price. Such multiplicity of contextual interpretation can be viewed as highly problematic, with participants assuming that 'anything goes' in meaning making. To counter such an occurrence, readers are required to employ ongoing critical reflection of whose voices are included and whose excluded, preferred perspectives and alternative perspectives; in short, a dialogic participation. Such a process would then ensure a participatory, transparent engagement with text analysis.

The students in the study exhibited a variety of responses to the notions of critical literacy and text analysis. Some used discourses to craft subject positions and highlight a sense of responsivity through reflective practice. For others, critical literacy was a means to reiterate their ideological standpoints. This subsequently called for a dialogic perspective, where classroom discourses — far from being isolated and singular — are interactive utterances of different texts that teachers and students draw upon from their social and cultural backpacks. To explain how engaging with text analysis can be a productive venture, one needs to move beyond self/other constructions, the amenable and resistant stance. If classroom discourse is perceived as an active site for the critical and postcritical negotiation of text — "a dialogic engagement with difference and diversity" (Vadeboncoeur and Luke, 2004, p. 205) explicating and actively seeking subject positioning through discourse — critical literacy becomes a productive exercise. It then helps envisage "a world in which we naturally participate in reflection, action, and transformation" (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004, p. 62).

The process of reflection requires "a level of problem solving that is complex and multidimensional", one that has far-reaching, intricate and multiple possibilities (Risko, Roskos and Vukelich, 2002, p. 171). Adopting critical poststructuralism enables reflection by "requiring individuals involved in education and politics to reflect upon their own subject-position and biases" Kellner (online, p. 6). Further, critical poststructuralism stresses the importance of the "reflexive turn" forcing participants "to constantly criticize and rethink their own assumptions" (Kellner,

online, p. 7). Such an engagement is significant if inclusiveness, diversity and difference are considered essential to critical literacy.

CONCLUSION

As noted by critics, text analysis and critical literacy are not unproblematic, (Hagood, 2001; Janks, 2001a; Ellsworth, 1989). There are constant slippages that could occur through the institutionalised perspectives that teachers might bring and the differential meaning possibilities that could occur through student interpretation. If, however, a constant shift in meaning possibilities and a multiplicity of interpretations is allowed, engaging with critical literacy could be a productive exercise. Such an exercise, however, requires continuing modifications to subject positions, both of teachers and students. It could then become an engagement with opening up "semiotic space for discourses normally marginalized and silenced" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 320).

If there are no alterations or amendments in subjectivities, there is a that teachers might not reflect on their practices, but instead confine themselves to institutionally sanctioned identities, perceiving students as less competent in unpacking the multitude of discourses in texts. There might be a further danger of perceiving students as the powerless, as they engage in and struggle to come to terms with dominant discourses.

To overcome such notions of disempowerment, teachers and students need to constantly rewrite meanings in what, Cazden and Beck (2003, p. 165) term "dynamic understanding that is collaboratively constructed in discussion among students". To make it possible to overcome the notions of institutional authoritative discourses, or the 'hidden curriculum' in operation in classroom discourses, requires, as Luke (2000, p. 453) proposes, "the explicit pedagogy of critical vocabularies for talking about what reading and writing of texts and discourses can do in everyday life".

In brief, this paper has argued that the 'four resources' model is central to the practice of literacy, particularly when used in "interrogating practice" (Freebody and Luke, 2003, p. 53) for critical reflection. The model establishes the importance of examining the multitude of discourses that are invested in texts. Furthermore, the model stresses the significance of recognising the heteroglossic, dialogic possibilities of texts. Thus, in engaging with text analysis and critical literacy, the classroom can become a site of

struggle over meaning, of attending to the binaries of identity/subjectivity, power/knowledge, differences, importantly a site of ‘becoming’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 238), where “alliances” are formed through discourses and meaning occurs “‘between’ the terms in play and beneath assignable relations” (p. 239).

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